



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dionne C. Williams, Communications Director Resigns as Communications Director to Pursue Doctorate at Howard University

FALLS CHURCH, VA. – Communications Director Dionne C. Williams, MPA, announced plans to pursue her doctorate in mass communications and media studies through Howard University's School of Communications. Her last day with the City is Monday, Sept. 19, 2005.

After serving as Communications Specialist for the District of Columbia Government's Chief Financial Officer, Dionne Williams joined the City in September 2000. Having worked in journalism, public relations, and public affairs within the private and public sectors, she transitioned into the public service arena, focusing her interests in local government.

Since her tenure with the City, Williams revamped the City's image and managed the City's message of superior service delivery through communications strategies, outreach programs, and promotion of the City's policies, programs and events. Williams implemented an array of effective communications tools, including *The Weekly FOCUS*; *The WaterWatch* quarterly newsletter for the City's 120,00 water customers; and the City's new online publication *eFOCUS*, distributed electronically biweekly to more than 3,000 residents and businesses. Williams revamped the City's Web site, and established an annual student art contest for Falls Church City students to enter through the City's Annual Report, Guide to City Services and Calendar. Williams also worked to develop a strong regional presence with media, other jurisdictional public affairs staff, and regional organizations on emergency preparedness, water services, transportation, and environmental issues. During her tenure, Williams simultaneously worked to obtain her master's in public administration from the American University in 2003.

While serving as an adjunct faculty member for Howard University's School of Communications for the past two years, Williams applied and secured a full scholarship and stipend to pursue her doctorate in mass communications and media studies. She expects to complete her program in 2008 and become a tenured professor.

"Dionne has built solid relationships with our media, citizens, employees, business leaders, and regional partners. She has done a superb job communicating all of our various initiatives, has raised the bar for the types of products we develop to educate our public, and has been an excellent counsel for senior management when working with our publics," City Manager Dan McKeever says. "Dionne has the knowledge and experience needed to educate future communicators. She will make an excellent scholar and professor," he continues.

Dionne Williams' last day with the City is Sept. 19, 2005. Nicole Gobbo, Communications Specialist, will serve as Acting Director of Communications during this transition.

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